



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
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Ely, Nevada 89301-9408
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html



In Reply Refer to:
9214 (NV-044)

AUG 11 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The Ely District Office is beginning the planning stages and public scoping period for a habitat improvement and fuels reduction project in Cave Valley, Lincoln County, Nevada (see attached map). An environmental assessment (EA) will be prepared to analyze environmental consequences and determine the significance of impacts associated with treatment alternatives. Our records indicate that you are or could be an interested party for projects proposed in the Cave Valley area. The project is being proposed as a joint effort involving Cave Valley Ranch and the BLM Ely District. Other partners may include the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The project is located in Cave Valley Wash within Basin big sagebrush (*Artemesia tridentata tridentata*) and Basin wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*) ecological sites. The area is currently dominated by rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) with basin wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) and few other forbs as understory components. The project location serves as yearlong habitat for mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, and sage-grouse. The eastern portion of the project area is adjacent to the west boundary of the Mt. Grafton Wilderness Area, and is within the Cave Valley Ranch Grazing Allotment. There are no Wild Horse Herd Management Areas within the project area.

The goals of the project are to: 1) reduce fuel loading of rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*) that has become established within and is threatening adjacent sagebrush vegetation communities; 2) restore plant vigor to existing natural grasses and forbs; 3) improve ecological function, fire regime condition class, and habitat for wildlife by increasing diversity and cover of forbs and grasses.

Treatments would be designed to remove rabbitbrush canopy to improve the vigor of existing natural understory species, and to increase the composition and diversity of understory species. Treatments would occur on both public and private lands (see attached map).

The current proposal is to mow rabbitbrush in the fall. In late spring or early summer following the mowing, herbicide (2,4- Dichlorophenoxyacetic and/or picloram) would be aerially applied to the new rabbitbrush re-growth. A seed mixture comprised of mostly forbs and some grasses would be applied with a rangeland drill during the fall after herbicide treatment.

Please contact Cody Coombs, Fuels Program Manager, by Wednesday, September 3, 2008 if: (1) you would like to submit comments on the goals of this project or to suggest alternatives and treatment options; (2) you would like to remain on the mailing list for all planning and EA documents associated with this project; or (3) you would be interested in discussing the project

in a public meeting. A public meeting could be scheduled depending on the amount of interest expressed during the scoping period. Contacts can be made by telephone at (775) 289-1854 or at the address listed on the letterhead. Please note that future planning and EA documents will only be sent to those who respond by the above listed due date. However, project status and planning documents associated with this project will also be posted on the BLM Ely District website (http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html) when available.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Cody Coombs, Fuels Program Manager at (775) 289-1854.

Sincerely,



Tye H. Petersen
Fire Management Officer

Enclosure: Map of Cave Valley Project Area



Cave Valley Fuels Reduction/Habitat Improvement Project

Bureau of Land Management
Ely District--Schell Field Office

Location:

T. 09N, R. 63E, Sec. 1
T. 09N, R. 64E, Sec. 6
T. 10N, R. 63E, Sec. 24, 25, 26, and 36
T. 10N, R. 64E, Sec. 30 and 31

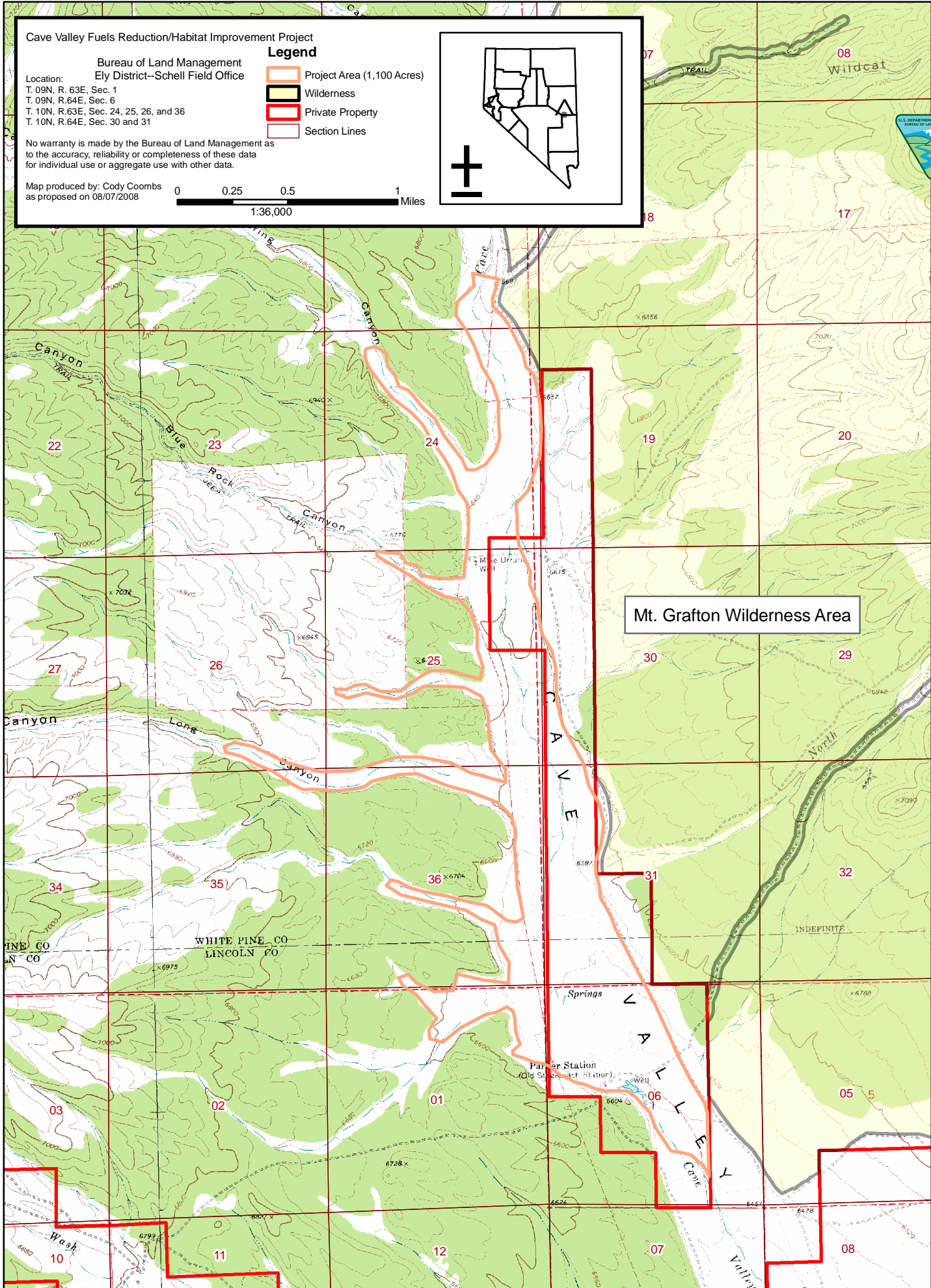
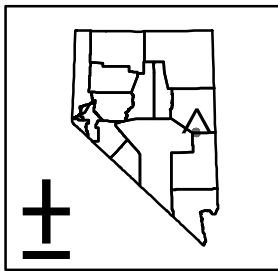
Legend

- Project Area (1,100 Acres)
- Wilderness
- Private Property
- Section Lines

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map produced by: Cody Coombs
as proposed on 08/07/2008

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
1:36,000



Mt. Grafton Wilderness Area

Ely District Office